

WASHINGTON, DC - Today Congressman Rob Wittman joined all other members of the House Committee on Natural Resources in sending H.R. 1385, the Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2009, to the full House of Representatives for a final vote. The bill would extend federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe, which have sought federal recognition through legislation for years. Wittman was an original cosponsor of the bill which was introduced by Rep. Jim Moran (VA-8).

"I am pleased that this important effort to federally recognize Virginia Indian tribes will soon make its way to the floor of the House for final passage. It is my hope that it will enjoy the same unanimous support of the House as the bill did in the 110th Congress," said Wittman.

"These Virginia Indian tribes are important culturally and historically to the Commonwealth. It is high time they receive the same recognition afforded to tribes across the nation," said Wittman.

In 1983 the Commonwealth of Virginia granted state recognition to the six tribes. The Constitution grants Congress authority in matters pertaining to tribes, including authority to grant federal recognition. Specifically, the First Congressional District includes the tribal seats of the Upper Mattaponi in King William County and the Rappahannock Tribe in King and Queen County. In 2007, the House voted unanimously in support of federal recognition for the tribes. The bill was stalled in the Senate during the 110th Congress.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.